

## North East Combined Authority, Overview and Scrutiny Committee

12 June 2014

Meeting held: Town Hall and Civic Offices, Westoe Road, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE33 2RL

### Present:

Councillor: Armstrong (Chair)

Councillors: Dillon, Glindon, Graham, A Lower, Maxwell, Meling, Pearson, Stradling, Tyler and Wright

### In attendance:

Cllr Daley – Northumberland County Council

Cllr Snowdon – Sunderland City Council

### 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Eagle.

### 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR

Submitted: Report of the Monitoring Officer (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes)

The Monitoring Officer introduced the report which invited members to appoint the Chair and Vice Chair for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

Upon a vote it was **RESOLVED** – That

- (i) The appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for the 2014/15 municipal year be deferred pending confirmation of remaining appointments to the Committee by the North East Combined Authority Leadership Board, at its next meeting on 15 July 2014; and
- (ii) Councillor Armstrong be appointed Chair for the meeting.

[At this point, Councillor Armstrong took the Chair]

Members then **RESOLVED** – That following confirmation of remaining appointments by the Leadership Board in July, a further meeting of the Committee be convened to consider the appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for the 2014/15 Municipal year.

#### 4 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Submitted: Report of the Monitoring Officer (previously circulated and copy attached to Official Minutes).

Members were invited to consider and agree the procedure for determining the work programme for the Committee for the Municipal Year 2014/15.

The Chair commented that there was a need for member authorities to share responsibility for providing support to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and called on members to consider within their own authorities, the extent of scrutiny officer support that could be provided going forward. It was acknowledged that capacity may vary across authorities.

In considering work programming and support arrangements, a number of key issues were raised, in discussion:-

- (i) A member noted that given the current pressure on resources it would not be effective to require scrutiny officers to attend committee meetings and members should seek, as far as possible, to liaise internally with their scrutiny teams to prepare ahead of meetings.

It was proposed that an effective approach may be to establish scrutiny panels/work groups to progress particular areas of work, with scrutiny support being provided by an authority where there was particular expertise.

- (ii) A member commented that she felt strongly that scrutiny officers from each authority should be in attendance to support members, to enable them to contribute as effectively as possible to meetings. A member concurred, noting that if there was general support for this approach then this should be facilitated.
- (iii) It was stressed that the Committee would require appropriate officer support to carry out its remit effectively and it was hoped that Chief Officers would take this on board in developing proposals. However, it was noted that this would not preclude members from also seeking guidance internally from their own scrutiny functions.
- (iv) P Melia, Chief Executive, North Tyneside Council, welcomed members' views and confirmed that it was recognised that there was a need to develop appropriate support arrangements for the Committee. He undertook to feedback comments to the Chief Executives' Group to inform their discussion, noting that an initial report on support arrangements for all committees had already been received and the matter was under consideration.

Members were informed that in determining support requirements there was a need to understand how the Committee's work programme would develop around that of the Combined Authority. P Melia explained that there would be further consideration of this issue by the Chief Executive's Group, as well as

consultation with scrutiny officers and a report would be brought back to the Committee on proposals for work programming and support arrangements. In response to a query from the Chair, officers indicated that it was unlikely that proposals would be available by the next Leadership Board meeting on 15 July 2014.

- (v) A member stressed that committee members should ultimately determine the approach to working arrangements that should be followed, taking into consideration the Combined Authority's work programme, availability of resource and number of meetings.

The Chair reiterated the need for appropriate support to be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee from across authorities. He welcomed P Melia's undertaking to refer members' comments to the Chief Executive's Group with a view to proposals being brought back to the Committee for consideration.

**RESOLVED** - That

- (i) Members' comments on Committee support arrangements and work programming be noted and referred to the Chief Executives' Group to inform ongoing discussion; and
- (ii) An update report on the Committee work programme and support arrangements be brought to the next meeting, with a view to final proposals being considered by the Committee at its' meeting in September.

Committee members were requested to return scrutiny topic suggestion forms within two weeks. It was confirmed that these would also be emailed to members.

**5 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

- Tuesday 9 September 2014 at 2pm
- Tuesday 9 December 2014 at 2pm
- Tuesday 10 February 2014 at 2 pm

Venues to be confirmed.

An additional meeting would be arranged (date and time to be confirmed) to consider Chair and Vice Chair appointments for 2014/15 Municipal Year (and possible substitute arrangements).